

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 03157 301705Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W
-----310342Z 034122 /67

R 301630Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6796
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 3157

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, SS,MR, MI
SUBJECT: EX-SAHARA: POLISARIO CONTINUES TO STRIKE MAURITANIAN
TARGETS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 3103

1. LOCAL SPANISH DIPLOMAT REPORTS THAT POLISARIO STURCK SNIM
(MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL HOLDING COMPANY) TRAIN CARRY-
ING IRON ORE FROM ZOUERATE TO NOUADHIBOU ON 18 DEC. IN VICINITY
OF BEN AMERA (2114N 1340W). ATTACKING FORCE CONSISTED OF NEARLY
100 POLISARIO GUERRILLAS IN 17 LANDROVERS ARMED PRIMARILY WITH
AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND ROCKET LAUNCHERS. (SENIOR, EX-PATRIATE
SNIM OFFICIAL, WHOSE COMPANY IS RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPORTATION OF
IRON ORE, CONFIRMED 21 DEC. THAT TRAIN HAD BEEN HIT AND SAID TWO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NOUAKC 03157 301705Z

LOCOMOTIVES HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY DAMAGED. EXTENT OF DAMAGE HAD NOT
YET BEEN DETERMINED, BUT SNIM OFFICIAL DID NOT EXPECT
EITHER LOCOMOTIVE TO BE FUNCTIONAL ANYTIME SOON--IF EVER.)
SPANISH DIPLOMAT SAID THAT MAURITANIAN GARDE NATIONALE
TROOPS, WHO HAVE PROVIDED SECURITY ESCORT FOR IRON ORE
TRAIN ON ROUTINE BASIS IN RECENT MONTHS, RESPONDED TO

POLISARIO ATTACK BUT WERE UNABLE TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO LOCOMOTIVES, RESULTS OF FIGHTING LEFT FOUR MAURITANIA DEAD AND SEVEN WOUNDED; POLISARIO IS SAID TO HAVE TAKEN FOUR MAURITANIANS HOSTAGES.

2. IN RESPONSE TO ATTACK ON TRAIN, SPANIARD CONTINUED, MAURITANIANS DESPATCHED SQUADRON OF REGULAR ARMY TROOPS FROM TICHLA (2136N 1458W) TO SEARCH OUT POLISARIO ATTACK FORCE. ANOTHER MAURITANIAN COLUMN HEADED SOUTH FROM AUSERT (2235N 1418W), AND GIRM MILITARY COMMAND ORDERED CESSNA AIRCRAFT TO UNDERTAKE AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE IN AREAS WHERE POLISARIO FORCE WAS LIKELY TO HAVE FLED. GIRM AIRCRAFT FINALLY TRACED POLISARIO AND, AFTER ALERTING ARMY UNIT DESPATCHED FROM AUSERT, MAURITANIANS ENGAGED POLISARIO UNIT ON 21 DEC. INITIAL CLASH OCCURRED NEAR UM DREIGA (2409N 1315W), BUT AS POLISARIO UNITS CONTINUED NORTHWARD SECOND ENGAGEMENT TOOK PLACE NEAR GUELTA ZEMMUR (2508N 1222W) ON 22 DEC. ASPOLISARIO FORCES CONTINUED TO FLEE IN NORTH-EASTERLY DIRECTION, MAURITANIANS WERE ABLE ON 24 DEC. TO UTILIZE MOBILE UNITS STATIONED IN BIR MOGHREIN (2514N 1135W). SPANISH DIPLOMAT SAID POLISARIO LOSSES FOR 21-24 DEC. FIGHTING (BASED ALMOST CERTAINLY ON INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM MAURITANIAN MILITARY SOURCES) WERE 20 DEAD, AT LEAST TEN WOUNDED AND SEVEN LANDROVERS DESTROYED. TEN POLISARIO LANDROVERS WERE SAID TO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY FLED FROM MAURITANIAN FORCES IN PURSUIT. MAURITANIAN LOSSES OVER THIS SAME PERIOD WERE FIVE DEAD AND SIX WOUNDED. SPANIARD SAID THIS POLISARIO FORCE WAS FYTST SEEN IN VICINITY OF BIR LEHMAR (2607N 1104W) WHERE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NOUAKC 03157 301705Z

TWO LANDROVERS PEELED OFF TO UNDERTAKE BRIEF MORTAR ATTACK AGAINST LOCAL MOROCCAN GARRISON, MAURITANIANS CLAIM, ACCORDING TO SPANIARD, THAT MOROCCANS DID NOT PURSUE POLISARIO FORCE FOLLOWING MORTAR ATTACK.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR WHY POLISARIO CHOSE TO ATTACK IRON ORE TRAIN WITH 100 TROOPS WHEN TWO LANDROVERS WITH CGCKET LAUNCHERS OR EVEN ONE MAN WITH APPROPRIATE SATCHEL CHARGE COULD DISABLE LOCOMOTIVES AS EFFZRTIVELY. ABOVE ACCOWKT DOES ILLUSTRATE, HOWEVER, THAT IN SPITE OF FACT MAURITANIAN FORCES NOW NUMBER OVER 12,000 TROOPS, THEY ARE STILL NOT ABLE TO PREVENTUC BUT ONLY TO REACT TO POLISARIO INCURSIONS, WE ALSO BELIEVE ABOVE ILLUSTRATES CLEARLY WHAT WE SENSE IS GROWING MAURITANIAN FRUSTRATION OVER UNWILLINGNESS OF MOROCCANS TO PURSUE ATTACKING POLISARIO UNITS AFTER GUERRILLAS HAVE STRUCK MOROCCAN GARRIONS.

HANDYSIDE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE, RAILROADS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, CASUALTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NOUAKC03157
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D770001-0056
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976124/aaaaacsc.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NOUAKCHOTT 3103
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 APR 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EX-SAHARA: POLISARIO CONTINUES TO STRIKE MAURITANIAN TARGETS
TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, SS, MR, MI, POLISARIO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006